



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

TO THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Health Careers

SINCE WORLD WAR II there has been an enormous growth in the population of the United States and especially in California. This is due as we all know to the increase in birth rate and extended life span. This means that there are more of the young and the old-age groups which need the greatest amount of medical care. In order to provide this care, our health services must be expanded, not only in providing more medical facilities but even more in the recruitment of added personnel. We feel that there is a health career for every student's interest and intellectual capacity. Our job is to make them aware of these opportunities.

Your auxiliary is attempting to make inroads into this field of recruitment. There are close to fifty county Health Careers chairmen in California. Working with them are many others from our membership of 7,369 women. They are doing this in cooperation with other professional groups such as the National Health Council, the National League of Nursing, American Physical Therapy Association and many others.

Our purpose is to recruit qualified students for careers in approximately 24 Health Careers. Each county has its own way of accomplishing this but, for the most part, there are three areas of emphasis: (1) Health Careers Clubs, (2) Health Careers Conferences, (3) Junior High School assembly programs.

The object of the Health Careers Club is to interest and inform boys as well as girls about the health career opportunities open to them, and to broaden students' scope of their own communities' medical facilities and needs. This is accomplished by the showing of specialized professional films and organizing field trips to hospitals, schools of nursing, schools for retarded or handicapped children, physical therapy clinics, pharmacy prescription laboratories and many others. Some of the meetings have as guest speakers professional medical specialists who are happy to answer the variety of questions that are asked. Some clubs even sponsor floats for

their annual high school parade. There was a total of 167 clubs in California last year sponsored by the Woman's Auxiliary to the C.M.A. and an increase is expected this year to match expanded high school construction.

The Health Careers Conference is one of the best means of disseminating information not only to students but, more important, to the high school counselors. Only juniors and seniors in high school are eligible and there are 600 to 800 students in attendance. The conference usually consists of a full day's program. There are panel discussions with representatives who are professionals in their field, a wide variety of health career movies and a hospital tour. In addition to this, booths are set up staffed by students and professionals in careers ranging from nursing and dietetics to occupational therapy and medical illustrators. This gives the student a chance to discuss a particular career on a very informal basis with a girl or boy near his own age. The Health Careers Conference day has an added advantage in that there is a follow-up program. The students who are interested in a particular career are invited to visit the offices or clinics of the medical specialist. There were 14 conferences held last year here in California with at least two more in the offing this year. Counselors are overwhelming in their praise of this project, and as they are attending in increasing numbers we can be sure that more students will be encouraged to follow a career in the health field.

Since there has been a real lack of communication between professional groups and junior high schools, we are attempting to fill the gap by sponsoring assembly programs. One such program is the showing of the film, "Helping Hands for Julie," which depicts the work of eight or nine medical specialists in their fight to save a little girl's life. It is dramatic as well as informative and elicits intelligent and thoughtful questions from these 13 and 14 year olds. We agree with school officials that many of the basic attitudes which later affect specific career decisions are acquired during the

junior high school years and it is not too early to seek basic commitment to health-related sciences and the idea of service for improvement of human welfare.

A widespread fallacy these days is that any able student who wants to enter a health field can find ample aid to finance training. Quotations from a report issued last year by the Association of American Medical Colleges bear out this fact.

. . . the average medical student has to pay more than twice as much as the average graduate student for his education . . . The medical student who receives (non-refundable) stipend income from any source . . . receives an average of about \$500 per year . . . The Arts and Science graduate student who receives stipend income is provided with an average of \$2,000 per year, . . . Thus, if one combines the fact that the medical student, as contrasted with the graduate student, has to pay twice as much for his education at the same time he receives one-fourth as much stipend income . . . it becomes clear that there is an 8:1 fiscal ratio of income and expense working to persuade the college senior to enter graduate school rather than medical school.

The result of our failure to provide enough financial aid for students is that able students from the

lower income groups are not able to enter the profession of their choice. Some might believe that the new Government program administered under the auspices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is the answer to our problem. It is—to a limited extent; however, only those students in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Nursing can benefit, and there are shortcomings. For example, students taking a three-year pre-physical therapy course are unable to receive any financial aid until their senior year when they are actually in a professional school of Physical Therapy.

There are a number of volunteer agencies such as the National Health Foundation, A.M.A.-E.R.F. and others who are working hard to span this financial gap. Last year your California auxiliary provided loans to the amount of \$6,699 and scholarships of \$26,821. These, however, are not enough, especially when we consider industrial competition for our best students. We are hoping that with the C.M.A. and its Auxiliary working together in recruitment and fund raising, more students in California will follow in the steps of many of us in Health Careers.

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